

POSTSCRIPTS

**Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the
American Medical Writers Association
Pacific Southwest Chapter
(1964-2014)**

POSTSCRIPTS

AIMS AND SCOPE

Postscripts magazine is the official publication of the Pacific Southwest chapter of the American Medical Writers Association (AMWA). It publishes news, notices and authoritative articles of interest in all areas of medical and scientific writing and communications. The scope covers clinical and regulatory writing, scientific writing, publication planning, social media, current regulations, ethical issues, and good writing techniques.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of *Postscripts* is to facilitate the professional development of medical writers and serve as a tool to advance networking and mentoring opportunities among all members. Towards this mission, *Postscripts* publishes significant advances in issues, regulations and practice of medical writing and communications; skills and language; summaries and reports of meetings and symposia; and, book and journal summaries. Additionally, to promote career and networking needs of the members, *Postscripts* includes news and event notices covering Chapter activities.

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INSTRUCTION FOR CONTRIBUTORS: We consider articles on any topic of interest to medical writers and communicators. It is helpful to look at the past December issues for year end table of contents, and browse past issues for style and type of articles published. We welcome contributions from AMWA members and non-members alike. Please contact editor.

ADVERTISING: *Postscripts* is an advertising-free magazine. However, articles describing products and services relevant to medical writers may be considered or solicited. As a service to our members, they may submit advertisements for their services or products for free. Please contact editor.

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Postscripts: <http://issuu.com/postscripts>
Chapter Website: <http://www.amwa-pacsw.org>

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POSTSCRIPTS

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From the President's Desk

An anniversary is a time to celebrate the joys of today, the memories of yesterday, and the hopes of tomorrow.

Welcome to the special 50th Anniversary newsletter issue of our AMWA Pacific Southwest Chapter!

Please join me in thanking our star newsletter editor, Ajay Malik, for collating this comprehensive, 40+ page volume. We hope you enjoy the pictures, stories, handwritten notes, personal letters and celebrations.

We start out the newsletter with a picture of our original November 11, 1964 charter. We thank Sue Hudson, Esther Tazartes, Loraine Schacher, Phyllis Minick and Ajay for sharing stories that celebrate the history and people of our chapter.

We congratulate our members who have been with our chapter for more than 10 years, and our long-term members, more than 25 years, who were presented with certificates of appreciation at the 50th anniversary celebration in Marina del Rey last month (see the write-up by Kate Smigiel). It is with regret that we say goodbye to a long term member, Scott Harrington, with a touching story written by Scott's friends. A special dedication goes to Ben Zinser, our member who has been with our chapter for the longest amount of time - 52 years!

As part of our regular features, Heather Oliff provides us with her experiences of being an expert witness, Rebecca Anderson tells us a tale of GMP inspection and Ellen Klepack keeps us up-to-date about the first biosimilar recommended for approval in the US. We thank our new employment coordinator, Sharyn Batey, for keeping us informed of jobs in the area.

Our Pacific Southwest members have presented at recent meetings, such as TIPPA (see the summary by Dikran Toroser) and AWIS Back to Work sessions (see the summary by April Cresse).

Now that we have celebrated our past, please join us to plan for our future by attending the May 1-2 Chapter Conference in Old Town. Registration is now open!

I am struck throughout this newsletter by sentiments such as sense of community...support among the members...welcomed me with open arms...It is my pleasure to be involved with such a supportive, friendly and educational organization.

Thank you for making this a wonderful chapter. We look forward to the next 50 years...

Donna

Donna Simcoe, MS, MS, MBA, CMPP
President, AMWA Pacific Southwest Chapter

Birth Certificate of the American Medical Writers Association Pacific Southwest Chapter

NOVEMBER 11TH 1964

THE UNDERSIGNED RESPECTFULLY
REQUEST THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
TO ISSUE A CHARTER TO A GREATER
LOS ANGELES CHAPTER OF THE AMWA

Robert Hannum	Granville F. Knight
Samuel Shore	Frances Grover
Samuel W. Benton	Carl B. Younger
Ben Zinser	Charles D. Marple
Paul Foster	Theo. J. Curfey
Vasilios Lambros	George N. Thompson
Fred E. Engreen	J. Dewitt Fox
Roger W. Barnes	Herbert J. Reingold
Theodore Bergman	
Frances Larson	
Gerald McKee	

In the left column:

?
Samuel Shore
?
Ben Zinser
Paul Foster
Vasilios Lambros
Fred E. Engreen
Roger W. Barnes
Theodore Bergman
Frances Larson
Gerald McKee
?

In the right column:

Granville F. Knight
Frances Grover
Carl B. Younger
Charles D. Marple
Theo. J. Curfey
George N. Thompson
J. Dewitt Fox
?
?
?
Herbert J. Reingold
?

American Medical Writers Association Pacific Southwest Chapter Congratulates Its Long-Time Members

Ben Zinser, Long Beach, CA — 52 years

Phyllis Minick, La Jolla, CA — 41 years

Jim Yuen, Moorpark, CA — 40 years

Michele Vivirito, Camarillo, CA — 34 years

Mary Ann Clift, Scottsdale, AZ — 32 years

Aaron Van Etten, Newbury Park, CA — 30 years

Jennifer Fissekis, San Diego, CA — 30 years

Lainie Adamson, Mission Viejo, CA — 29 years

Loraine Schacher, San Diego, CA — 29 years

Linda Kester, Rodondo Beach, CA — 28 years

Steven Jaksha, San Diego, CA — 28 years

Ann Ciemnoczolowski, Scottsdale, AZ — 26 years

Bill Cobb, Thousand Oaks, CA — 26 years

Gillian Bradshaw, Irvine, CA — 26 years

MaryAnn Foote, Westlake Village, CA — 26 years

Esther Tazartes, West Hills, CA — 25 years

Michael Schneir, Los Angeles, CA — 25 years



Ben Zinser



Phyllis Minick



Jim Yuen



Michele Vivirito*



Mary Ann Clift



Aaron Van Etten



Jennifer Fissekis



Lainie Adamson



Loraine Schacher



Steven Jaksha



Gillian Bradshaw



MaryAnn Foote*



Esther Tazartes

List courtesy of Gail Flores, PhD, American Medical Writers Association Pacific Southwest Chapter membership coordinator. Membership information up to December 2014.

* picture not current

The History and the People of the American Medical Writers Association Pacific Southwest Chapter: The 50th Anniversary (1964-2014)

The American Medical Writers Association (AMWA) Pacific Southwest Chapter serves medical writers, editors and medical communicators living or working in the southwestern United States from the San Gabriel Mountains north of Los Angeles to the Painted Desert in Arizona, and down to the southern beaches of San Diego. That is an area twice the size of the United Kingdom (roughly 20,000 square miles) with nearly 350 active members.

Last year, the Chapter reached its 50th anniversary (1964-2014), and in January 2015, celebrated this milestone with a brunch in Marina del Rey, the French Riviera of Southern California.

Magna Carta

We owe the existence of the AMWA Pacific Southwest Chapter to 26 members who came together in Los Angeles on November 11, 1964, and signed a charter establishing the chapter.

One of the signatories on that historic charter, Ben Zinser is still an active AMWA member (52 years). Now 93 years old and retired, he as a young man was medical science editor for the Los Angeles/Long Beach-area newspapers, including the *Independent Press-Telegram* and *Long Beach Press*. His investigative reports can be found in newspaper archives and databases.¹

During the early days of the Chapter, Ben was unique among his peers: He was the only member trained as sportswriter in the club of surgeons.



A Fine Writer

When the editors of the *Independent Press-Telegram* appointed Ben as their full-time reporter for medicine and science in October 1965, they called him "uniquely qualified" and cited 3 compelling reasons for his appointment.² First, the newspaper said, Ben was a "fine writer", a winner of five Theta Sigma Phi writing awards, an Army commendation medal for wartime journalism overseas, and a national citation from the Veterans Administration; second, he was knowledgeable in the field of medicine; and third, he had personal interest in the field of health and medicine as he was on the advisory board of the American Cancer Society and board of the Psychiatric Clinic for Children.

Fifty years later, these three attributes still sum up what makes a good and engaging medical writer.

Ben and Jerry

Besides Ben, there is another signature on the 1964 Charter, one name that stands out: Gerald "Jerry" McKee. Jerry is the DNA of our Chapter.

Since the founding of AMWA in 1939, the membership had been predominantly MDs (mostly male and white), and so were its presidents. However, the decade of Woodstock, Pink Floyd, and ABBA also

1. <https://www.google.com/search?q=ben%20zinser%20site:news.google.com/newspapers>

2. <http://www.newspapers.com/newspage/30700936/>

* Copy of Charter (page 4); Report on 50th anniversary celebration at Marina del Rey by Kate Smigiel (see page 23); Ben Zinser's letter to the President, Donna Simcoe (page 24).

saw significant changes in the world of AMWA. In 1970, Eric Martin, PhD—the author of the AMWA Code of Ethics—became the first national AMWA President who was not an MD. And 5 years later, Jerry McKee followed him by becoming the first person without a doctorate degree and second who was not an MD to hold the office of the AMWA President (1975–1976).³ The Martin-McKee presidencies helped cement the broad appeal of AMWA to all medical communicators.

Jerry had an illustrious career in medical communications. He was the principal writer and executive of Audio-Digest in Los Angeles.⁴ In the 1970s, Audio-Digest was the largest company supplying educational audiocassettes to physicians for continuing medical education (CME). Today, Audio-Digest continues to provide CME for medical professionals, delivered via CDs and digital media. (Source: www.audio-digest.org)

In AMWA, Jerry's influence extends from helping to launch the core curriculum (AMWA workshops), AMWA Film Festival, and Asilomar conference to inspiring numerous budding medical writers.⁴

The Influence(r)

Jerry's footprints appear in the stories shared by other writers, like the one in the autobiography of our Chapter's past-president Lanie Adamson:

“The next AMWA chapter meeting was at the Los Angeles Press Club, about 60 miles from home. I started the drive with excitement that turned to nagging self-doubt. After all, these were real medical writers. I hadn't studied medical writing, wasn't a journalist and didn't even know what a medical writer did. I pulled into the Press Club parking lot and nearly drove out, but other people were arriving, “Well, I'm here,” I sighed to myself, “I'll go in.”

A woman with a name tag identifying herself as Michele Vivirito welcomed me, collected my money and handed me a name tag. A charming, energetic woman with flaming red hair introduced herself as

Elizabeth Stone and invited me to sit next to her. We were joined by Jerry McKee, with his goatee, fine sense of humor, and extensive knowledge about medical writing, medical writers and jobs.

I am indebted to Michele, Elizabeth and Jerry for their warm and unforgettable welcome that evening. They changed my life.

—Lanie Adamson. In: *Stories of My Life*
(*Postscripts Vol 4 No 26, July 2014*)

A Family Ophthalmologist

Michele Vivirito shared this about another Chapter founder with signature on the Charter: "Here's a bit of personal trivia about the charter. One of the more easily deciphered signatures (second to the last in the second column) is Herbert J. Reingold, M.D. Dr. Reingold was our family ophthalmologist from about 1952 until 1972. In the early 50s, he surgically corrected my sister's strabismus. I undoubtedly saw him for a yearly check-up in 1964 (I would have been 15 years old), the year he signed the charter request. I was very surprised to see his name when I inherited the charter document as president. I later found out that he wrote a couple of books on oculomotor disorders. He wasn't an active AMWA member by the time I joined in 1981, and I think he died in the late 80s."

Frances Larson Award

Frances Larson, one of the founders of the chapter, held many positions in the Pacific Southwest chapter, including president. She served as managing editor of *Hospital Topics* magazine and was medical editor (with Jerry McKee) of Audio-Digest. Since mid-1990s, the annual Frances Larson Memorial Award was given by the Pacific Southwest chapter for excellence in medical writing, for an article written for lay or professional audience.

The Pioneers

The founders (signatories on the charter) include the following

3. Ross MF, Thompson SC. Seminal Moments in AMWA History: 70 Years of Medical Communication Excellence. *AMWA J.* 2010;25(4):166-167

4. Melnick on Writing: An Anthology of Columns From The American Medical Writers Association Journal. Melnick A (ed). Publisher: AuthorHouse. 2012.

* See page 5 for the list of members with 25+ years membership.

individuals: Ben Zinser, Carl B. Younger, Charles D. Marple, Frances Grover, Frances Larson, Fred E. Engreen, George N. Thompson, Gerald McKee, Granville F. Knight, Herbert J. Reingold, J. Dewitt Fox, Paul Foster, Roger W. Barnes, Samuel Shore, Theo. J. Curfey, Theodore Bergman, and Vasilios Lambros, (and others whose signatures we could not decipher!)

The 25+ Year Club

The list making the chapter's 25+ year members reads like a Who's Who of AMWA with three AMWA past-presidents: James Yuen (1993-1994), Phyllis Minick (1994-1995) and MaryAnn Foote (1999-2000). The league of AMWA presidents also includes Sue Hudson (2007-2008) who has been our chapter member since 1997.

These members have enriched our Chapter in various capacities, including as Chapter Presidents, as Chapter board members, and as most importantly as volunteers and mentors.

The Bookkeeper

Linda Kester served as the treasurer of the Chapter throughout the 1990s, and she is still very active in our Chapter serving as a board member. She was the force behind updating our Chapter bylaws last year—the previous version was so outdated that it was current for an era before the internet.

On her [Linda's] retirement from the chapter treasurership, Noelle Demas and Jacki Dyck-Jones (both chapter past-presidents) wrote: "Despite a very busy career as associate editor at the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, Linda found time to contribute as treasurer and active board member, doing much more than just balancing the books. She was never asked to perform additional tasks but volunteered to take on all kinds of extra work."

European Conquest

Phyllis Minick, AMWA Past-President, harbored AMWA expansionist goals. She teamed up with Art Gertel about 20 years ago and sailed across the pond to convince European Medical Writers Association (EMWA) to become part of AMWA. She and Art succeeded and EMWA was briefly (for 2 years) a chapter of AMWA. Today the imprints of that achievement lives on in joint AMWA-EMWA initiatives, such as the Budapest Working Group, which is helping to update the ICH guidelines.⁵

Being a proud member of the founding class of AMWA workshop leaders (that was in 1994 in Anaheim, California), Phyllis still continues to share her expertise by moderating the Freelance Forum column in the *AMWA Journal*.

After the European adventure, now Phyllis is looking closer to home, and she imagines AMWA members becoming active in science writing programs in our schools.⁵

Madame Secretary

Michele Vivirito, past-president of our chapter, served as the secretary of our chapter throughout the 1990s. She also held several positions at the chapter and national level: president, treasurer, secretary, and Asilomar Conference registrar; and at national level as AMWA secretary, among other positions. She was honored with AMWA Fellowship in 1993. See her complete profile in the *AMWA Journal*.⁶

In her member profile⁶ in the Summer 2010 issue of the *AMWA Journal*, Bettijane Eisenpreis wrote: ". . . before Michele was a writer, she was a teacher. She continues to teach at every opportunity." Many successful medical writers give credit to Michele for mentorship when they were just starting out: eg, see Lanie's autobiography⁷, or a note by Mary Royer in the article on Michele's profile⁶.

5. Hamilton S, Seiler W, Gertel A. The EMWA Budapest Working Group: A 2-year collaboration to make recommendations for aligning the ICH E3 guideline with current practice and developing clinical study protocol guidance. *Medical Writing* 2014; 23(4), 281-288. DOI: 10.1179/2047480614Z.000000000254

6. Eisenpreis B. [Member Profile] Michele Vivirito. *AMWA J.* 2010;25(2):91

7. Adamson L. Stories of my life. *Postscripts.* 2014;4(26)

* See page 17 for and article by Noelle Demas and Jacki Dyck-Jones honoring Michele Vivirito for her work for the Chapter.

She continues to teach Regulatory Writing at University of Southern California and still finds time to mentor incarcerated girls as a volunteer literacy tutor for the County of Ventura, CA. "Literacy tutoring has become a passion for me," she says.⁶

Loraine Schacher was *Postscripts* newsletter editor from 1993-1999, the time when our chapter's newsletter was a printed paper copy that had to be slapped with a first class postage stamp, and dropped in the mail. . . Michele used to warn Loraine to rein in spending on newsletter (so I'm told!) Loraine was honored with AMWA President's Award in 2001.⁸

Lanie Adamson, past-president of our chapter, taught numerous workshops at AMWA, and was honored with the Golden Apple Award recently (2013).⁷ She is a medical writer, speechwriter, screenwriter, stand-up comedian, and a children's book author—another fine example of talented and versatile members enriching our Chapter.⁷

Sharpest Pencil and Other Stories

MaryAnn Foote is an AMWA treasure. She established Amgen Medical Writing Department; authored several textbooks on oncology, regulatory writing, and clinical trial registries; filled the pages of *AMWA Journal* with numerous articles on oncology, anatomy, physiology, medicine, medical writing, etc, over the years.

Though now retired, one can still find her at the AMWA Annual Conferences, giving workshops and moderating open sessions. Her talks are always entertaining, engaging and captivating (skills that transcends her writings, and probably has something to do with her liberal arts background!)

She is a past-president of AMWA and an AMWA Fellow. She was honored with the Harold Swanberg Distinguished Service Award in 2005.⁹ In her Swanberg address, acknowledging previous honorees, she said: "The former

Swanberg winners are the people who helped build AMWA and the career of medical writing." — this sums up her own contributions, as well.

Sandra Hecker asks: What do you get when you combine a ballerina, model, chef, college professor, and medical writer? — Answer: MaryAnn Foote.¹⁰

MaryAnn displayed her funny side during the Swanberg Address⁹ with stories of the now-defunct Asilomar East Conference held in the picture-postcard rolling hills of upstate New York but in a hotel with no phone, no faxes, no heat, no television, no meat, no liquor, and 1 towel per 2 guests per room. Or, the time when AMWA developed the "no breast-feeding in class" rule. But on the serious side, she had these nuggets for advice:

- Commit to your craft
- Commit to the time needed to learn your craft
- Manage your own career
- Celebrate your success
- Get a mentor/be a mentor
- Know when it is time to call it quits

During the last 3 years, she has been sharing the stories of faux pau she had encountered over the years in medical writing enterprise. Her column, "The Sharpest Pencil in the Cup," published in *Postscripts* takes a humorous view of (good and bad) decisions and practices germane to medical ethics.¹¹ These articles provide a real-world take on the principles behind the AMWA Code of Ethics.

The Oracle Predicted Jim's Ascent

Jim Yuen came to the Pacific Southwest Chapter in 1996 after about 20 years with our Northern California neighbors. For this move, we have to thank MaryAnn Foote, who in 1996 when building the Amgen Medical Writing Department called Jim and said, "I have a position open; how about trying for it?"¹² So, our Chapter scored one over NorCal (thanks to MaryAnn!) Unfortunately, around

8. Loraine Schacher receives President's Award. *AMWA J.* 2001;17(2):40

9. Foote MA. Harold Swanberg Distinguished Service Award Lecture. *AMWA J.* 2005;20(4):167-169

10. Hecker SJ. Memebr Profile: MaryAnn Foote. *AMWA J.* 2002;17(4):67-68

11. The Sharpest Pencil in the Cup. *Postscripts* 2013;3(12):23 -- 2013;3(16):99 -- 2013;3(19):154 -- 2014;4(25):90

12. Eisenpreis B. Member profile: Jim Yuen. *AMWA J.* 2007;22(3):154

this time, Jerry McKee passed away. Jim says: "As a matter of fact, his memorial was the first [AMWA] event that I attended in SoCal."

Jim was AMWA President from 1993-1994. He remembers: ". . . sitting in the bar of the Drake Hotel in Chicago during the AMWA Annual Conference, Jerry predicted that I would one day become AMWA President. Sure enough, he was right!"

Today, like MaryAnn, Jim is also retired, and enjoys his time travelling, exercising, playing piano, and trying his hand in cooking.¹²

The Diversity of Talent in the 25+ Year Club

Esther Tazartes is a medical editor based in Los Angeles. She has served as Managing Editor of the medical journal, *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, and is on the editorial staff of *Fertility and Sterility* (a peer-reviewed medical journal). You will find Esther at our local chapter-organized get-togethers (brunches and happy-hours). Mary Ann Clifft is an editor at Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale, Arizona. Ann Ciernoczkowski is also a medical editor based in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Aaron Van Etten, a regulatory consultant based in Thousand Oaks, somehow managed to stay with companies starting with letter A like his name—Amgen, Abraxis, and Allergan—during his long career. He shared his skills with AMWA members at the Asilomar Conferences.

Gillian Bradshaw is a product marketing manager based in Orange County. Besides AMWA, she is very active in the Rotary Club of Irvine (having served as their past-president). Her spirit of public service also extends to her work as Corporate Advocate and Ambassador of Working Wardrobes, a nonprofit that helps men, women, young adults and veterans overcoming difficult challenges to confidently enter the

workforce and achieve self-sufficiency by providing career training, job placement assistance and wardrobe services in an environment of dignity and respect.

Michael Schneir from the University of Southern California still teaches a core workshop on taxonomy: I took that workshop (and enjoyed) in Memphis AMWA meeting last year on my way to earning the Essential Skills Certificate. His article on taxonomy published in the *AMWA Journal* in 2001 is a great read.¹³

Steven Jaksha has a successful dental practice in San Diego. He also spends time with the US Navy Reserve Dental Corps, and describes himself as: "a parachute jumping dentist who loves his country by backing up his Navy & USMC buddies & not being afraid to jump from great heights, get dirty & place some rounds down range."¹⁴

Jennifer Fissekis, an AMWA member for 3 decades, splits her time between Rye Brook, NY, and San Diego. She has a long history of working with the Empire State-Metro New York Chapter and as workshop and open sessions leader at the AMWA Annual conferences. She was honored with AMWA Fellowship at the 2007 AMWA Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia.¹⁵

The Hudsons

Both Sue and Jim Hudson have served our chapter in various capacities, including as chapter presidents, and they have continued to engage with the chapter. At the national level, they continue to conduct workshops and engage newbie medical writers and they never miss the Asilomar Conferences. They brighten up these conferences by organizing, directing, and acting in skits that are the highlight of the banquet on the last night at Asilomar. Last month at the 50th anniversary celebration, Jim reminded us that skits are the best way to make new friends and bond with old ones – this is what networking is, and this is how it is done.

13. Schneir ML. Word usage flaws: ambiguity. *AMWA J.* 2001;16(3)

14. <http://www.stevenjakshadmd.com/>

15. De Bellis D. Fellowships: Jennifer Fissekis, Jim Hudson, and Donna Miceli. *AMWA J.* 2007;22(4):160.

The Future

One common thread among all AMWA longtime members is that they are teachers and mentors—they all have been incredibly generous with their advice and support ... teaching/encouraging new members to swim on their own. This is the culture of AMWA; the culture of sharing and supporting. That's what makes AMWA special.

Medical Writing as a profession continues to evolve, and with the work that went into creating our organization at the national and chapter level, our members have a great resource to become better writers. With the 50th anniversary sliding into the rear-view mirror, we are ready for the 75th.

Acknowledgement:

The author is grateful to Jim Yuen, Sue Hudson, and Brian Bass (AMWA immediate past president) for help with the research, sharing old pictures (printed in the accompanying pages) and proofreading and help improve this article.

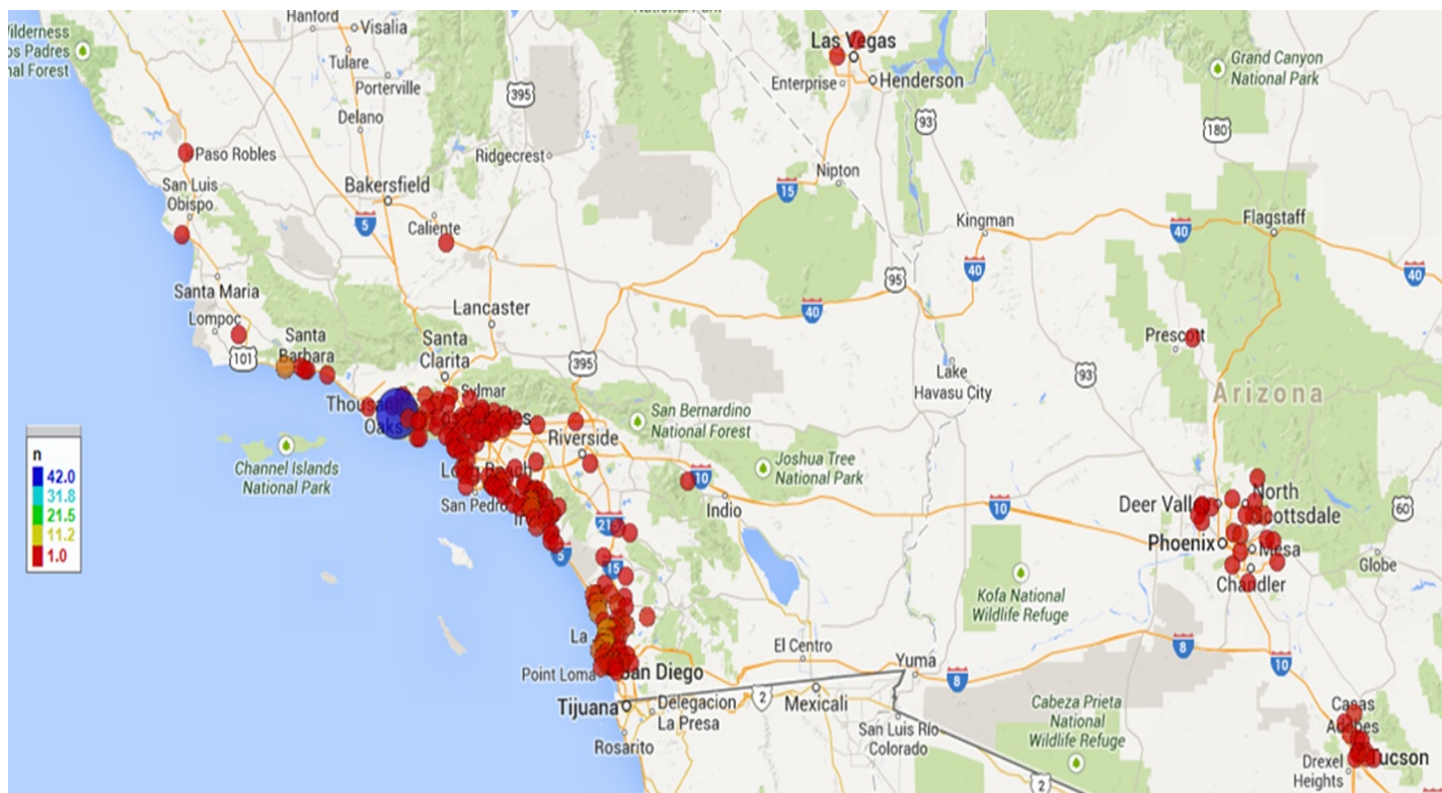
Ajay K Malik, PhD
Editor, *Postscripts*



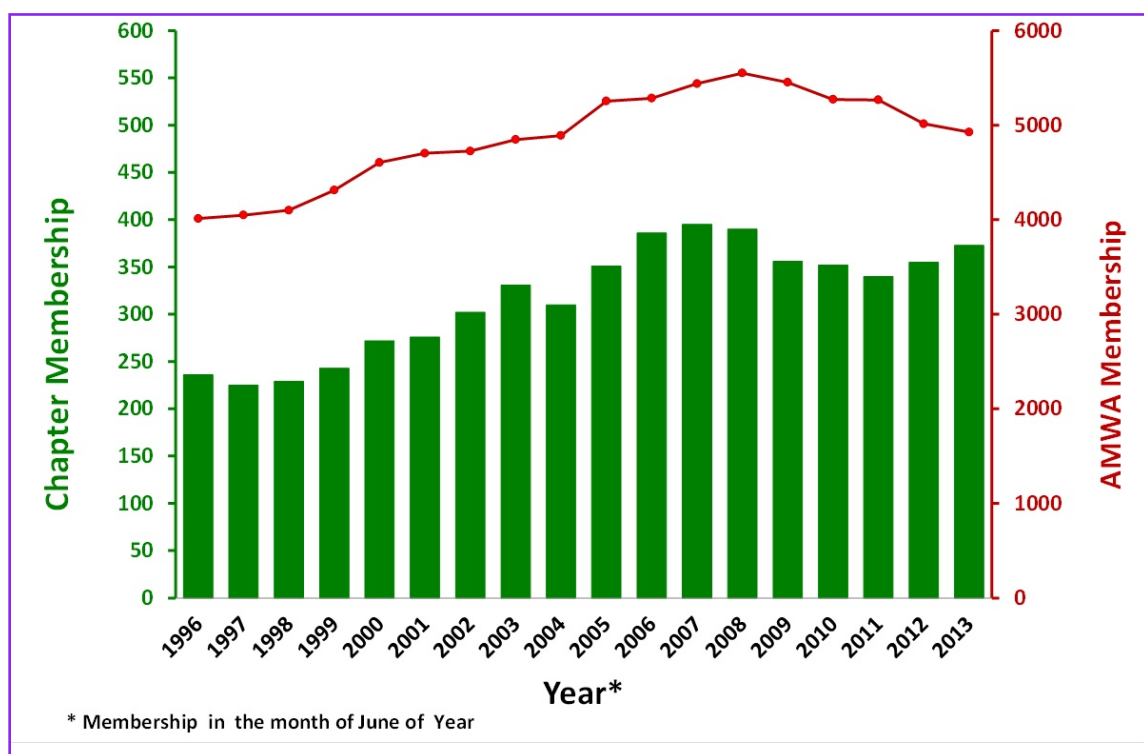
Asilomar Conference, 1994. Photo courtesy of Jim Yuen.

American Medical Writers Association Pacific Southwest Chapter Membership Map & Stats

AMWA Pacific Southwest Chapter currently has approximately 350 members who work or live in Southern California, Arizona and southern Nevada. The chapter's geographic boundaries include an area of 200,000 square miles from the San Gabriel Mountains in the north, to year-round warm beaches on the Pacific coast in the west, to the Painted Desert to the east.



Map developed by Donna Simcoe



Data by Gai Floresl via AMWA HQ. Plot by Ajay Malik.

Membership on 12/1/2013:
AMWA PacSW = 345
AMWA = 4759

American Medical Writers Association Pacific Southwest Chapter Presidents

By **Sue Hudson**, AMWA Pacific Chapter President, 2000-2001

According to the chapter bylaws, the president plans and organizes chapter events, presides over meetings, appoints committees as needed, coordinates the efforts of other chapter officers and volunteers, and submits an annual report to the national AMWA organization. The president holds a 2 year term after serving as president-elect, chosen by chapter members from volunteer candidates. (Other elected officers are the immediate past president, secretary, and treasurer.)

A Peek Behind the Curtain

The path to, and through, the chapter presidency may take surprising turns. Often, the job falls to whoever is willing to do it. When I had been a chapter member for about 2 years, I attended a spring chapter picnic at a park in Orange County. LouAnn Murray, the president, invited me for a stroll along the river. In that idyllic setting, she beguiled me into agreeing to take the job of president-elect and assume the presidency at the end of her term. Fortunately, more experienced AMWA colleagues were at my side to ensure that I didn't blunder too badly. Special thanks to Michele Vivirito, Linda Kester, and Loraine Schacher for their coaching and support!

What can go wrong? Meeting attendance, for one thing. At one meeting, a professor demonstrated physical therapy techniques for patients with Parkinson's disease. All 6 of us who attended thoroughly enjoyed the presentation, which was held at USC in downtown Los Angeles on a Friday evening. In denial about hellish LA traffic, I had been sure we'd have a crowd. Conversely, we had 30+ people at an evening meeting at which a statistician talked about Bayesian analyses for clinical trials; members were arguing in the rest rooms afterwards about fine points of his presentation. Go figure.

As my term ended its first year, we were having the late spring meeting in our back yard in Simi Valley.

The discussion turned to the fact that we still needed a new president-elect. Vic Leipzig, husband of previous president LouAnn, suggested that Jim Hudson (who had stepped away for a bio-break) would make a splendid president-elect. When Jim returned to the gathering, he was very surprised to discover that he had been nominated. Thus, he became chapter president after me.

Recent leaders enticed into the chapter presidency have demonstrated levels of proficiency and professionalism that we can all be proud of; they have laid the groundwork for a strong chapter in the 50 years ahead!

30+ Years of AMWA Pacific Southwest Chapter Presidents:

Michael R. McCarthy	1984 — 1985
Elizabeth S. Stone	1986 — 1987
Beverly LeBov Sloane	1988 — 1989
Michele Vivirito	1990 — 1992
Lanie Adamson	1993 — 1995
Ken Faust	1995 — 1997
LouAnn Murray	1997 — 1999
Susan Hudson	2000 — 2001
Jim Hudson	2001 — 2002
John W Keener	2003 — 2007
Jacki Dyck-Jones	2007 — 2008
Noelle Demas	2009 — 2010
Jennifer Grodberg	2010 — 2013
Donna Simcoe	2014 —

Presidents before 1984 include Jacob Weisberg, George Banks, Jerry McKee, and others; details, unfortunately, are lost in the mists of memory.

American Medical Writers Association Pacific Southwest Chapter's Gold, Silver and Bronze Members

Gold Members

20-25 years (joined 1991-1995)

Eric Chiel	Jim Hudson
Karen Cooksey	Catherine Murray
Sharon Cross	Kristine Quart
Noelle Demas	Don Smith
Colleen Duffy	Susan Thomas
Lauri Graham	Richard Trubo
Laurie Haynes	Robin Weaver

Silver Members

15-20 years (joined 1996-2000)

Rebecca Anderson	Narima Lopes
Jennifer Arevalo	Sara Lou O'Connor
Carolyn Bates	Heather Oliff
Dove Bunkin-Thomas	Jack Raber
Blynn Bunney	Jane Rollins
Kathleen Dunn	Janis Schaap
Meher Dustoor	Mike Shields
Jenny Grodberg	Jean Siegel
John Hawes	Carol Squires
Sue Hudson	William Stark
Sandra Jean	Barbara Tucker
Judy Lazar	Susan Vintilla-Friedman
Amy Lindsay	Margaret Wahl
	Helen Wilfehrt

Bronze Members

10-15 years (joined 2001-2005)

Sheryl Achten	Gail Flores	Roma Lewy	Anita Rihal
Laura Alper	Amy Foreman-Wykert	Jenneen Lowry	Jeff Radcliff
Carolyn Baker	Julie Gage	Louise Lubetkin	Martha Sensel
Kathryn Boorer	Christine Gatchalian	Jim Lutz	Sonia Serron
Val Breda	Nancy Graden	Susanna Mac	Brent Shannon
Janice Carlson	Teresa Greenstreet	Michele Mathieu	Mary Kay Stein
Kathy Cavanaugh	Rebecca Gunnill	Yeshi Mikyas	Marcy Tichacek
Ting Chang	Margaret Hoppenrath	Diane Murphy	Molly Tomlin
Doug Charles	Marilyn Ingram	Loretta Nielsen	Patricia Vendely
Meres Childers	Lisa Kaspin-Powell	Joan O'Byrne	Jill Waalen
Teresa Chu	Ged Kenslea	Lisa Patrone	Julie Wang
Juli Clark	Meera Kodukulla	Tim Peoples	Robin Wulffson
Jacki Dyck-Jones	Keith Langley	Beate Quednau	Michelle Zakson
Stephen Fletcher		Chip Reuben	

Tales From the Early Years of the American Medical Writers Association Pacific Southwest Chapter

By Esther Tazartes, Loraine Schacher

I guess it was just a lucky break that in 1990, the year I joined AMWA, the annual conference was held in Los Angeles. When I joined AMWA, I was the managing editor of Clinical Infectious Diseases, and our editorial office was located in Brentwood, California. In 1990 it wasn't that easy to travel and still run a medical journal because we didn't have computers in our office and we didn't have access to the internet. If I traveled on business, I had to take 30-page manuscripts and 10-page galley proofs in my suitcase and edit with pen and paper at night in my hotel room (paper is heavy!). Because the AMWA meeting was in Los Angeles, my entire editorial staff was able to attend the meeting (they were enthusiastic about attending the meeting even after I informed them that each course would require several hours of homework). One of the courses that we took was called "Organizing the Biomedical Paper." The course helped us understand how good organization of investigative biomedical papers is the basis of effective and appropriate communication. I was "hooked" on AMWA and decided to continue my AMWA membership.

In 1992 I attended the AMWA Pacific Regional Conference in Asilomar (Northern California) and took courses titled "The Rhetoric of Formal Medical Writing" and "Writing Abstracts." By this time I realized that AMWA conferences were the ultimate resource for my medical editing career and that I could meet medical writers and editors who would become trusted colleagues and lifelong friends.

In 2007 I opened a freelance medical editing business. I no longer had daily face-to-face interaction with other medical communication professionals, so it became more important than ever to attend the AMWA chapter meetings and annual conferences. I met Roma Levy, a medical writer who had recently joined AMWA, during one of the chapter meetings. One day I was watering my front lawn and I saw Roma drive up. I was really surprised that she was coming to visit me because she didn't know where I lived, we didn't know each other that well, and she hadn't called to say that she was coming over. I thought out loud that AMWA sure was a friendly group! It turned out that she was visiting her cousin, who just happened to be my next door neighbor. We have seen each other at chapter meetings over the years, and we still laugh about that chance meeting years ago.

I couldn't imagine in 1990 that I would still be a member of AMWA in 2015, but I hope to celebrate my 50th anniversary in 2040!

Esther Tazartes, MS
Ezt Editorial Service
West Hills, California

When I joined AMWA in 1987 I was rather intimidated by the meeting place, which was the old L.A. County Medical Association's office building in the Westlake area, just west of downtown Los Angeles, near Hoover St. and Wilshire Blvd.

This area was rather dangerous then, especially after dark, because of much gang activity. When I arrived at the building's parking lot around 6 PM I tried to park near a lamp post, so there would be some light on my car hours later when the meeting was over. It must have been summertime, because the sky was still light when I arrived, but when we left to go home it was quite dark.

My colleagues were also a bit nervous about going to their cars in the dark, and we tried to all walk to the parking lot in a group for protection.

The medical Association's members also felt nervous about this, because they moved to a different location about a year later, and our chapter began holding our monthly meetings in restaurant meeting rooms.

Loraine Schacher, MS
Past-Editor, *Postscripts*
(1993-1998)

Tales From the Early Years of the American Medical Writers Association Pacific Southwest Chapter

By **Phyllis Minick**, Past-President of AMWA

As a long ago President of AMWA (1994-1995) and now a long-time absentee from Annual Conferences, my wish list then has become reality now. That earlier vision was AMWA's global expansion. For a long time, of course many of our members have worked for international companies and far more communicate, as I do, with a global spread of clients. AMWA's current membership includes participants from around the world, some of whom attend our Annual Conferences. This breadth of coverage offers dazzling opportunities to each of us as individuals and collectively to AMWA as the center of a growing professional web.

A favored memory is clear of annexing the European Medical Writers Association (EMWA). After Art Gertel and I attended two EMWA Conferences and that group became an AMWA chapter, the annexation proved unwieldy and ended. However, I see that the concept remained, as educational programs in medical writing became available in Ireland and Germany through the Center for Professional Innovation and Education (CfPIE). China has a huge medical publication enterprise supported by organizations like the Chinese Scientific and Technological Editorial Association. My own freelance business has broadened to include authors in South Korea and increasing numbers in Sweden, China and Japan.

My other fondest memory is inclusion in the very first stage of AMWA's Workshop Program. Jerry McKee, AMWA President in 1973 teamed with Lottie Applewhite to develop the first four AMWA Workshops, and they formalized the idea in a wooden cabin overlooking the sea at Asilomar. I was invited to present at their first day-long conference in Anaheim. Just before I became AMWA President in 1994, I was the AC Workshop Chairman (in Boston) and we had 80 workshops at one of our best attended conferences to date. Now my Pacific Southwest Chapter, which just celebrated the chapter's 50th birthday with a huge luncheon, has weekly phone conferences and regular webinars. This year, we'll have a chapter conference in San Diego, near my home. So the memories of launching ideas, activities and – basically, ever better means of communication – seem like a birthplace of our very adult AMWA.

Phyllis Minick

When I was Workshop Chair in Boston, Dr. Tod Forman took some of us to a famous Irish pub one evening. Many Irish coffees later, I fell into bed at 2 am. The next morning at 8:45, my phone rang with a message from the Registration Desk that one of my workshop leaders had just canceled.

I was to teach??? I dressed, brushed my teeth, took 3 aspirins and appeared before the 30 paid class members. I explained, apologized and asked, "what did you come to hear?" Quite happily, they turned the session into a free-for-all seminar with questions asked and answered by the registrants. Probably the best class I ever taught. By the way, since I never won the Golden Apple Award for best instructor, those participants probably learned more than anything I alone could have taught!

Phyllis Minick

Linda Kester Retires After Decade of Service as American Medical Writers Association Pacific Southwest Chapter Treasurer

By Noelle H. Demas, MS, and Jacki Dyck-Jones, PhD

Past-Presidents of AMWA Pacific Southwest Chapter

Linda Kester retired in 2010 after serving as the AMWA Pacific Southwest Chapter Treasurer for over a decade:

The AMWA Pacific-Southwest Chapter owes a great deal of its success to the dedicated and unparalleled decade of service contributed by Linda Kester. Despite a very busy career as associate editor at the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, Linda found time to contribute as treasurer and active board member, doing much more than just balancing the books. She was never asked to perform additional tasks, but volunteered to take on all kinds of extra work.

Linda worked closely with other chapter members to help plan the logistics for our meetings. She found excellent meeting locations, planned the lunch menus, made sure we had any necessary audio and visual equipment, and negotiated discounts for some of these venues. The day of the meetings, she always arrived 30 minutes early to ensure that everything was in order and brought the printed name tags that she had prepared. Linda would then staff our registration table with a friendly smile to greet everyone.

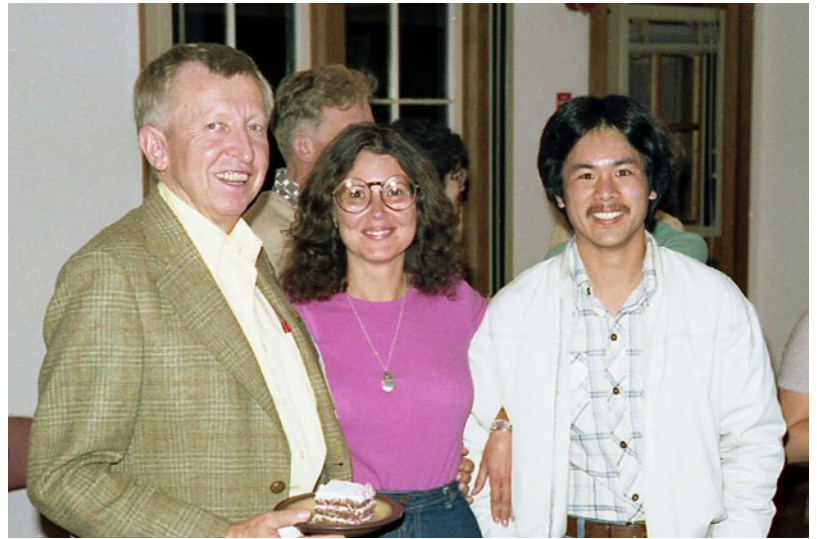
Linda took these organizational and planning skills and multiplied them times twenty to provide guidance and contributions to many Pacific Coast (Asilomar) Conference Committees over the past 10 years. She performed the thankless duty of registrar and helped to make sure everything ran smoothly, that every participant was taken care of, and that the bills were paid. Members from many chapters benefited from Linda's experience and insights as she represented the chapter as our delegate for many meetings of the national board of directors and served on the Budget and Finance Committee. And most recently, Linda contributed to updating our chapter by-laws, which really needed attention. Through it all, Linda remained the calm voice of sanity throughout any crisis.

Her many years of service make her a repository of chapter history and know-how, and her guidance and contributions continue to be invaluable. We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for a job well done. Linda, thank you for all of your hard work!

Remembering Good Times at Asilomar Conferences - Part I



1980



1980



1989

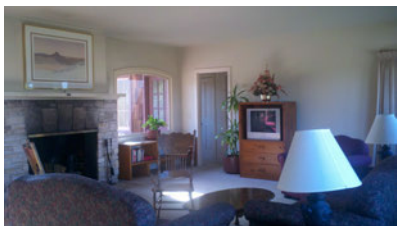
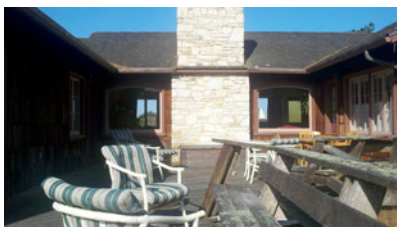


1989

TOP Left: Jerry McKee. TOP Right: Jerry McKee, Darlene Markovich [NorCal Chapter], Jim Yuen.
Bottom Left: George Banks, Michele Vivirito, Elizabeth Stone, Jerry McKee, Julie Petrauskas.
BOTTOM Right: Michele Vivirito and Jerry McKee (standing), George Banks, Elizabeth Stone and Tom Lang (middle), Julie Petrauskas (in red shirt). Photos courtesy of Jim Yuen.

Remembering Good Times at Asilomar Conferences - Part II

Director's cottage at the Asilomar conference center where the committee and conference staff used to stay and where a party was usually held the last night of the conference.



Pacific Southwest and Northern California chapters' members at Asilomar conferences.

1985 Photo

1st row: Pat Cornett, ? ? ? Elizabeth Stone, ? Betty Cohen, Bev LeBov Sloane,
2nd row: Jerry McKee, Jo Goulson, Nancy Barber, Hans Weber, ? Sandra Pace
3rd row: ? ? ? Kirsten Nichols, ? ? Art Gertel ?
4th row: Max Losi, ? ? Della Mundy, Dan Liberthson, Barbara Saks, ? ?
5th row: Bob Iles, ? Tom Lang, ? ? ? ? Doris Fletcher ?

1986 Photo

1st row: Sandra Pace, Harriet Benson, ? Elizabeth Stone, ? ? ? Jo Goulson, ?
2nd row: Nancy Barber (at end), Lanie Adamson (4th from right),
3rd row: Tom Lang (1st from left)
Others in photo: Jerry McKee, Roger Manwaring, Hans Weber, Dan Liberthson, Kay Willis, Kathryn LaMar, Della Mundy

1987 Photo

1st row: ? Sandra Pace, Jerry McKee, Jo Goulson, ? Connie Mitchell, ?
2nd row: ? Barbara Saks, Elizabeth Stone, ? ? ? ? Michele Vivirito
Top row: Dan Liberthson (6th from right; with beard).
Others in photo: Jackie Turner, Tom Lang, Tony Flores, Della Mundy, Wendy Bachhuber, Bob Orsetti, Hans Weber, Dan Pat Kyllonen, Lila Schwartz

NOTE: ? are unidentified people, NOT uncertain names

**Group photos courtesy of Jim Yuen. Director's cottage pictures by Noelle Demas.



Historical Timeline of Postscripts

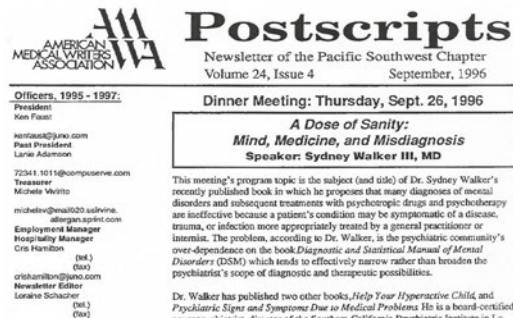
By Ajay K Malik, PhD, Editor, *Postscripts*

1970s

Postscripts was established circa 1972.

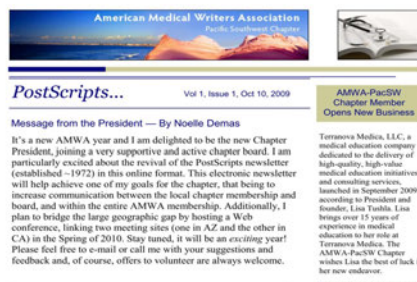
1990s

Loraine Schacher was *Postscripts* newsletter editor from 1993-1999, the time when our chapter's newsletter was a printed paper copy that had to be slapped with a first class postage stamp, and dropped in the mail. Loraine was honored with AMWA President's Award in 2001, and chapter President's Awards in 1995, 1999 and 2001.



2009

Noelle Demas, MS, past-president of AMWA Pacific Southwest chapter (2009-2010) launched the first online issue of *Postscripts* in October 2009 as Volume 1. Last newsletter issue came out in December 2010.



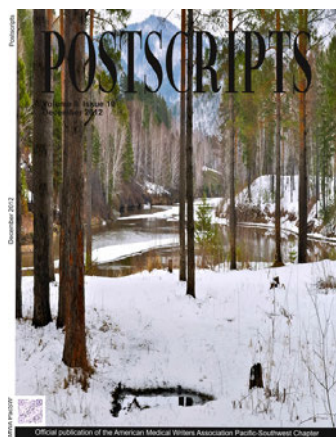
2012 February

The online version of *Postscripts* re-launched by Ajay Malik as Volume 2.



2012 December

Postscripts adopts magazine format. Vol 2, issue 10)



2014 May

Postscripts profiled in AMWA Update

AMWA Update <amwa-update@amwa.org> Thu, May 8, 2014 at 11:23 AM To:



AMWA's Membership Newsletter

May 2014

In this Issue:

AMWA Hosts First-Ever Medical Communications Inter-Organizational Summit
AMWA Board of Directors Annual Spring Meeting
Read *Postscripts*, AMWA PAC-SW Monthly News Magazine
Results of Global Publication Survey Now Available
AMWA Journal Collections On Sale Now in the AMWA Store
Discount for AMWA Members at 2014 TIPPA Midwest Meeting
AMWA Welcomes Andrew Buskey

///

READ *POSTSCRIPTS*, AMWA PAC-SW MONTHLY NEWS MAGAZINE

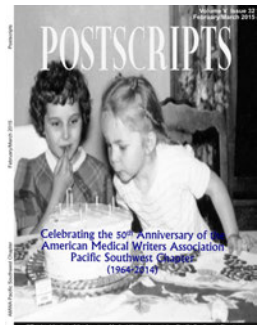
2014 July

Autobiography of Lanie Adamson, Stories of my Life, published as special issue of *Postscripts* (Vol 4, issue 26).



2015 February/March

Special issue celebrating chapter's 50th anniversary (Vol 5, issue 32).



Loraine & Ajay (the editors)

Recognizing Noelle Demas and Bill Hewitt of American Medical Writers Association Pacific Southwest Chapter

Noelle Demas with her parents proudly holding the Asilomar Maximizer Award that she received at the Asilomar 1999 conference.

The award was a plunger with rubber snakes wrapped around it, and was passed from winner to winner. The Asilomar Maximizer Award was presented to a person who demonstrated a positive attitude, had fun, and took full advantage of the learning opportunities that AMWA offered at Asilomar.

The “iconic plunger” was later retired (sadly!) and Noelle was presented with a lovely photo of Asilomar by Sue Hudson.



**Photo courtesy of Noelle Demas.*



Jerry McKee with Jerene Hewitt, the wife of Bill Hewitt (a dedicated member and supporter of the Pacific Southwest Chapter in the 70s and 80s). Jerene accepting a posthumous award on behalf of Bill for his service to the chapter.

**Thanks to Sue Hudson for the Photo, and Michele Vivirito for the memory of who/when/where.*

American Medical Writers Association Pacific Southwest Chapter's 50th Anniversary Celebration Brunch in Marina del Rey



Pictures by Donna Simcoe, Michele Vivirito and Bernard Delacruz. Collage by Ajay Malik.

On January 24th, 2015, members of the AMWA Pacific Southwest Chapter met at Cafe del Rey overlooking the harbor in Marina del Rey, California, to celebrate our Chapter's 50th anniversary. The Regatta Patio of the restaurant with a view of the marina (top right). Second row: Jenny Grodberg and Valerie Breda (left), Jennifer Shipperd and ?? (right). Third Row: Tim Peoples, Michele Vivirito and Martha Sensel (left); Valerie, Ajay, Jenny, Kote, ??, ?? (right). Yummy desserts: Chocolate tower and key lime pie and view of the marina.

A Toast to the 50th Anniversary of the AMWA Pacific Southwest Chapter: Brunch Aside Boats in Marina del Ray

By **Kate Smigiel, PhD**, new AMWA Pacific Southwest member

On January 24th, a Sunday afternoon, the members of the Pacific Southwest chapter met at a dockside restaurant, Cafe del Rey, overlooking the harbor in Marina del Rey to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our chapter. At this Sunday brunch, the wine glasses remained filled, the conversations were lively, and the food courses kept coming, as the sun and ocean breezes filled the private back room of the restaurant.

As a new member still making the transition to the medical writing field, I couldn't have picked a better time to reach out to the AMWA community in Southern California! At the restaurant, I was greeted by Donna Simcoe, president of the chapter, who introduced me to new and veteran AMWA members. I was immediately struck by the sense of community and support among the members, who welcomed me with open arms, regardless of my current position as a scientist rather than a medical writer.

The brunch celebration was wonderfully organized, and one of the special touches was the display of the original chapter charter document from 1964 with the signatures of the founding members! Decorating the banquet tables, were pictures from previous chapter meetings and retreats, especially those held at the Asilomar Conference Center, outside Monterey, CA. It was clear that our Pacific Southwest chapter has a rich history of idea-sharing, networking, and lifelong friendships.

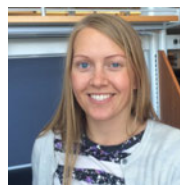
Also impressive was the distances traveled by members to meet in Marina del Ray. Our chapter covers a large geographical area, and members had driven from as far away as Thousand Oaks and San Diego (in weekend traffic on I-5!) to attend to this event. As for me, I especially appreciated the meeting location in west LA and the opportunity to meet local colleagues, for example, Jennifer Kelly Shepphird, a medical writer with a research background like myself, who may not routinely

attend such meetings in more southern locations.

After dining on delicacies including crab cakes, salmon salad, chocolate cake and key lime pie, not to mention the bottomless mimosas, we enjoyed award presentations by Donna Simcoe to long-term (25+ years) members, including Esther Tazartes, Linda Kester, and Michele Vivrito, as well as stories about how our chapter evolved over the years. Sue and Jim Hudson's stories got the entire room laughing, and Michele Vivrito reminisced about how long ago our chapter meetings which were held in downtown Los Angeles (in a rented room in LA coroner's office) used to conclude with security escorts to the parking lot!

At this anniversary celebration, while the long-standing members celebrated the chapter's history and renewed friendships, it gave a chance to newer members like me to forge new connections and toast the hard work of others. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this event, and I look forward to future interactions with AMWA members!

About Kate Smigiel, PhD



Kate Smigiel is a postdoctoral scientist at Cedars Sinai Medical Center studying the mechanisms of acute lung injury. She is also a Senior Editor of scientific manuscripts for American Journal Experts. Kate received her PhD in Immunology from the University of Washington in Seattle in 2013 and has been a member of the AMWA Pacific Southwest chapter since moving to Los Angeles in March 2014. She is interested in applying her background in medical research to cutting-edge clinical therapies that aim to manipulate the immune system. She can be reached at kssmigiel@gmail.com or via LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/pub/kate-smigiel

Sharing Stories at the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the American Medical Writers Association Pacific Southwest Chapter at Marina del Rey



Pictures by Donna Simcoe, Michele Vivirito and Bernard Delacruz. Collage by Ajay Malik.

Certificate of Appreciation awarded to long-term (25+ years) members Esther Tazartes, Linda Kester (not shown), and Michele Vivirito by Donna Simcoe (top row). Jim Hudson, Sue Hudson, Jacki Van-Dyck, and Michele Vivirito (middle left sharing stories with the members. Donna made a presentation about the chapter (bottom right). Andrew Helleman (present Secretary of the chapter) with Michele Vivirito who was the Chapter's the Secretary through the 90s; Michele with Ajay Malik (bottom center). Members in middle right picture include Kate, ?? (far left row), Tim Peoples, Andrew Hellman, Jacki, Jenilyn, ?? (middle row), Sue Hudson (right row).

Letter From Ben Zinser, an American Medical Writers Association Member of 52 Years

[REDACTED]
Long Beach, CA [REDACTED]
January 30, 2015

Ms Donna Simcoe
[REDACTED]
San Diego, CA [REDACTED]

Dear Donna:

Many thanks for sending a note along with the certificate. It was very thoughtful of you to go to all that trouble. It's a beautiful certificate.

As I write this, I'm staring at a wall that contains three award certificates from Theta Sigma Phi, national fraternity for women in journalism. One of my editors called up the group's president and insisted it should be sorority in journalism--not fraternity. He, the editor, got told off in a hurry.

That took place in the mid 1950s.

It's hard to believe that I started writing for newspapers in 1938. First, sports. Then, local news. Later, AP editor. No one has told me how AP dispenses news stories today. Probably computers, which I don't understand. It took me seven years to acquire a bachelor's degree because of a hitch (3+ years) in World War II. Pacific Theater. Even made it into Tokyo after it was all over.

But I digress. AMWA has been good to me. When I joined, members were all surgeons, except for me, a former sportswriter.


Once again, thanks for sending the certificate.

Cordially,

Ben

Ben Zinser

The Members Share Their Thoughts at Marina del Rey Anniversary Luncheon

	
Starter Seasonal Fruit tahitian vanilla bean yogurt, toasted granola Dungeness Crab Cake baby kale, foxy persimmon, sherry vinaigrette	
Entree Steak and Eggs parmesan scrambled eggs, potato hash Mediterranean Salmon Salad poached salmon, butter lettuce, olives, tomato, feta, red onion, tarragon vinaigrette Seasonal Vegetable Fettuccini sautéed vegetables, garlic, shallots, white wine, butter	
Dessert Lemon Meringue Tart fresh lemon curd, toasted meringue, sweet pastry shell Chocolate Tower dark chocolate cake, hazelnut praline mousse, orange sauce	
CAFE del REY	

to our long-term members and
Happy 50th Pac-Southwest Chapter
- Lori Smette

I'm so excited to join
this group. Everyone has
been so friendly & welcoming
- Sarah Madsen

NEW MEMBER, TOO - THANKS
FOR A GREAT DAY AND THE
WARM WELCOME! HAPPY 50TH!
- ELIZABETH RANICONE

Glax to be part of
the Pacific SW chapter
of AMWA - on to
the next 50 years
- Marni Sencel

The PacSW chapter has
enriched my life both
professionally and personally.
Looking forward to the
next 50 years!
- Michele Vivinto

HAPPY 50TH!
CAN'T WAIT FOR
THIS 100TH!
Andrew Heuser - getting
Valerie Brack

50 is counting - getting
later - better!
AMWA PacSW
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this group. Everyone has
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- Sarah Madsen

I enjoy the
chapter for the
friends I have
made and the
knowledge I have
gained.
- Heather Oliff

Happy 50th Anniversary!
I have enjoyed being
part of such a wonderful,
friendly, educational group!
- Jennifer Murray

AMWA has
changed my life -
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career moves I
ever made
- Jackie
Dyck-Jones

Happy 50th Anniversary!
I am glad to be at
the meeting for the 1st
time. Met a lot of
people, made some
connections & enjoyed
the food & the company
Koti Chintalacheruvu

Wonderful 50th
celebration - I've
been fortunate over
the years to meet
so many intelligent,
supportive people
through this
organization.
- Laila Korte

Happy 50th to our
chapter! I have enjoyed
all AMWA events I have
attended, both locally + nationally,
and they have been a valuable
medium for networking + bringing
freelance employees to my organization -
- Laila Korte

Thanks Donna for organizing a
great 50th party - it was a wonderful
chance to meet great people!
- Kate Swisef

Welcome to
the 50th anniversary
of the Pacific Southwest
chapter! I'm happy to be
a part of this wonderful group!
All the best, Donna Swisef

Happy 50th anniversary!
I'm so fortunate to have
started my career with
such a wonderful, supportive
organization, & such warm &
welcoming people. - Rosemary

Happy 50th Anniversary!
It's been great being part
of such a friendly, welcoming,
intelligent chapter. Cheers
to another 50 years!
- Jenilyn Virrey

Happy 50th
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such a wonderful, supportive
organization, & such warm &
welcoming people. - Rosemary

Happy 50th Anniversary!
It's been great being part
of such a friendly, welcoming,
intelligent chapter. Cheers
to another 50 years!
- Jenilyn Virrey

Happy 50th
Anniversary to
us! AMWA has
changed my life -
joining this chapter
was one of the best
career moves I
ever made
- Jackie
Dyck-Jones

Happy 50th Anniversary!
I am glad to be at
the meeting for the 1st
time. Met a lot of
people, made some
connections & enjoyed
the food & the company
Koti Chintalacheruvu

I'm so excited to join
this group. Everyone has
been so friendly & welcoming
- Sarah Madsen

NEW MEMBER, TOO - THANKS
FOR A GREAT DAY AND THE
WARM WELCOME! HAPPY 50TH!
- ELIZABETH RANICONE

Glax to be part of
the Pacific SW chapter
of AMWA - on to
the next 50 years
- Marni Sencel

The PacSW chapter has
enriched my life both
professionally and personally.
Looking forward to the
next 50 years!
- Michele Vivinto

Happy 50th Anniversary!
I have enjoyed being
part of such a wonderful,
friendly, educational group!
- Jennifer Murray

AMWA has
changed my life -
joining this chapter
was one of the best
career moves I
ever made
- Jackie
Dyck-Jones

Happy 50th Anniversary!
I am glad to be at
the meeting for the 1st
time. Met a lot of
people, made some
connections & enjoyed
the food & the company
Koti Chintalacheruvu

Wonderful 50th
celebration - I've
been fortunate over
the years to meet
so many intelligent,
supportive people
through this
organization.
- Laila Korte

The Role of a Medical Writer as an Expert Witness

By **Heather S. Oliff, PhD**, Science Consulting Group, North Tustin, CA

"I've been falsely accused. Can you help me?" That was the call I received 14 years ago from a soldier pleading for help. He said that he had been falsely accused of drug abuse, and only I could help him. Obviously, I was quite taken aback. He explained that after his first tour of duty in Afghanistan, he returned home and decided to "bulk-up his muscles" to prepare for his next tour of duty. Before being deployed he took a mandatory drug test. It came back positive for d-amphetamine. He was being dishonorably discharged. He claimed that he did not take any illegal drugs; he was eager to clear his name and go fight for our country. I agreed to speak with his military defense lawyer to see if I could help him.

The soldier found my name through an article that I wrote for an e-zine in 2000 called "Drug Tests: Don't fall victim to a false-positive." The article was a "work for hire," and I gave away all North American Rights. Subsequently, the article was picked up by many websites and has been re-posted for 14 years; it has also been translated into many languages.

First the military lawyer asked me about my background and expertise. I explained that I have a PhD in pharmacology and toxicology. I regularly study the scientific literature and have published 1,120 summaries and analyses of the current status of dietary and nutritional supplement research. I have also contributed website content to a variety of health-related websites. I have authored 17 peer-reviewed articles on various medical and biological topics and have been a contributing author for several published health compendiums. Based on my credentials and expertise, he said I could be an expert witness. My job as an expert witness was to review all of the materials that he obtained and write a statement or report. The lawyer explained that I would be able to request additional materials and interviews, and conduct my own literature searches. I agreed to take the assignment.

Writing the report was similar to writing a scientific review article. It was mentally stimulating and fun trying to solve the puzzle and find proof in the scientific literature that would explain how the soldier could have a false-positive drug test. Ultimately my report provided the support needed to clear his name. It felt great to help someone who was willing to risk his life for our country.

Unbelievably, a similar situation presented itself to me on three other occasions. Each time the caller received my name from that single article written in 2000. Each time I took the case and was able to help the person. On another occasion, a colleague's husband who is a lawyer contacted me to be an expert on his medical malpractice case involving an adverse drug interaction. Once again, I received the materials and wrote a report. Most recently I have been working on a case that has spanned 1 year. Each time I wrote a report there was an appeal, and I am hired to write a rebuttal. I have now been an expert witness on 6 separate cases. In every situation the lawyers have been very helpful, ensuring that my writing uses the proper legalese and format. Therefore, you do not need to be an expert in legal matters or legal writing to be an expert witness. I have not yet testified at trial, but that is always a possibility.



Being a medical expert witness is a stimulating diversion from typical medical writing. Apparently, it can be difficult for lawyers to locate expert witnesses, particularly for unique cases. For that reason, there are companies that keep a registry of expert witnesses. They act as a finding service for expert witnesses. I have registered with 2 of these companies. Occasionally they contact me for additional information to see whether I am a good match for a case.

I recommend that you consider being an expert witness if you have (1) an advanced degree, (2) a unique knowledge base, (3) confidence in your knowledge of a particular field, and (4) published extensively in that field. You can try to break into the field by contacting lawyers that you know or registering with an expert witness service (Two examples are listed below. I do not have comprehensive experience with these companies; I do not endorse their services). Or perhaps you will be lucky like me, and the opportunity will come knocking on your door. I suggest that you open the door!

Thomson Reuters Expert Witness Services
roundtablegroup.com/expertportal

IMS ExpertServices
www.ims-expertserives.com

About Heather S. Oliff, PhD



Heather S. Oliff is a freelance medical writer who regularly writes all types of documents—from peer-review manuscripts to regulatory documents to magazine articles. She has also written a small book, and often gives seminars and works with physicians and health professionals. Heather has a PhD from the University of California, Irvine in pharmacology and toxicology. She is owner of Science Consulting Group, LLC (www.scicongroup.com), and has been an AMWA member since 1999. You can find her article on writing for the nutraceutical industry in the 2002 winter issue of the AMWA Journal (volume 17, page 31), “Communications standards for alternative medicine.” She can be reached at holiff@scicongroup.com.



http://www.amwa.org/events_annual_conference

GMP Inspectors and the Case of the 10-Gallon Urine Bucket

By Rebecca J. Anderson, PhD

In recent years, many pharmaceutical manufacturers have been guilty of manufacturing blunders, which various pharma bloggers (think *FiercePharma* and *DIA Daily*) have described in graphic detail. I hope that among their New Year's resolutions these suppliers, finally, get a grip on their quality control issues.

Generic drug companies have most frequently been highlighted for their lax production practices, and since 2013 the FDA has cracked down on at least a dozen offenders, including Ranbaxy, Sun Pharmaceuticals, Cadila Pharmaceuticals, and Marck Biosciences (not to be confused with Merck). Regulatory inspectors cited sloppy recordkeeping, such as failing to log batch records, recording data for tests that were not performed, releasing drugs to distributors despite official batch records that showed the batch did not meet specifications, and entering batch data in editable databases—at one company, employees deleted 5,301 chromatography test results because the drug batches didn't meet specifications. The inspectors said that some companies retested batches and only recorded results that made the grade.

Defending their behavior, these companies point out that the problems are merely due to differences in documentation requirements between the FDA and the EU. (FDA inspectors audit in-process production, whereas EU regulators focus on end-product specifications.) The cited manufacturers say that the same products banned by the FDA are fine as far as the EU is concerned. That may be, but I'd rather not have my drugs manufactured by employees who, if they kept records at all, wrote their results on paper towels.

Lately, the citations have been more serious than paperwork glitches. At Marck Biosciences, for example, FDA inspectors found mold in a washroom adjacent to the sterile manufacturing area, and the moldy room's ceiling had "caved in." They also saw "numerous dead insects" in the sterile sample pass-through room and dead, decaying frogs near the loading dock. Personally, I prefer to get my protein from products that list it in the label along with carbs and fats, not as a mystery ingredient in my drugs. But take heart. You will no longer see Marck-branded products on the shelf. The company has changed its name to Amanta Healthcare.

More than 40% of the generic and over-the-counter products sold in the US are manufactured in India, and FDA inspectors have been racking up a lot of frequent flyer miles to regulate generic manufacturing practices there. But problems also exist here.

The Ben Venue plant in Ohio, for example, received FDA's equivalent of the film industry's Golden Raspberry Award. In 2011, the company got a blistering Form 483 report from the FDA—deficiencies so serious that the company subsequently shut down its sterile-drug filling and packaging lines. The problems included faulty manufacturing equipment that shed particles into the vials used for injectable drugs. But the enduring image from that audit report was the 10-gallon container of urine that apparently was used by factory workers to avoid bathroom breaks.

Ben Venue was a major contract manufacturer, producing drugs owned by J&J, Pfizer, and Bristol-Myers Squibb, among others. The plant shutdown caused shortages of more than 80 drugs and a tsunami of angst among patients across the country. *The solution?* FDA authorized the temporary importation of unapproved drugs from India. (It's a small world, after all.)

After investing more than \$350 million in upgrades, Ben Venue still faced an uphill battle with the FDA. In the end, the company sold out to another sterile-injectable drug manufacturer, who packed up Ben Venue's best equipment for use at its other plants and scrapped the rest. The disposition of the 10-gallon urine bucket is unknown.

About Rebecca Anderson, PhD



Rebecca J. Anderson is a freelance medical writer and the author of two books, *Nevirapine and the Quest to End Pediatric AIDS* and *Career Opportunities in Clinical Drug Research*. Prior to medical writing, Dr. Anderson managed research and

development projects for twenty-five years in the pharmaceutical/biotech industry. She holds a Ph.D. in pharmacology from Georgetown University. She lives in Southern California, and when she is not writing, she absorbs the sights and sounds of the West Coast's rich culture and heritage. She can be reached at rebeccanderson@msn.com.

AMA-zing Style — the AMA Manual of Style Column

By **Dikran Toroser, PhD, CMPP**, Amgen Inc., Thousand Oaks, Calif.

Race/Ethnicity, Age, Disability and Sexual Orientation

Clinical manuscripts and regulatory documents usually have a short description of demographic characteristics of the study population. Four of the characteristics included in the demographic description (ie, race/ethnicity, age, disability, and sexual orientation) may require special consideration since these descriptors may lend themselves to cultural interpretations. However, the AMA Style Guide has guidance to keep medical writers on a sure footing. (It is also a good idea to consult FDA and ICH guidelines when developing a regulatory document.)

Race/Ethnicity. *Race* is defined in the Webster's dictionary as "a category of humankind that shares certain distinctive physical traits". *Ethnicity* relates to "groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background".

Race and ethnicity are cultural constructs, but they can have real biological implications. Caution is recommended when the race concept is described. Some argue that the race concept should be abandoned, others argue for retaining the term but limiting it to the social, as opposed to the biological, realm.

Genetically, a person's heritage can convey medical predispositions (eg, lactose intolerance with Chinese ancestry, sickle cell disease with West African descent).¹ Specifying a person's race or ethnicity can provide information about the generalizability of the results of a specific study. Since many people in ethnically diverse countries, such as the US, have mixed heritage, a racial or ethnic distinction cannot be considered absolute, and it is often based on self-designation.

A manuscript's "Methods" section is a good place in which to explain how persons were classified according to race/ethnicity. The following are some examples:

METHODS

Study Participants

Race or ethnicity was self-reported by the parents of the children from a list including non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic black, or other (specify).

Participants were asked to self-identify their race with the question, "Do you consider yourself to be primarily white or Caucasian, black or African American, American Indian, Asian, Hispanic or Latino, or something else?"

When mention of race or ethnicity is relevant to an understanding of scientific information, be sensitive to the designations that individuals or groups prefer. Below are some examples directly from the AMA manual of style.

- In the US, the term *African American* may be preferred to *black* (note, however, that this term should be allowed only for US citizens of African descent). People with African heritage living in Europe, may be described as "people of African descent" or "people of Caribbean descent", as applicable.
- In reference to persons indigenous to North America (and their descendants), *American Indian* may be preferred to the broader term *Native American*, which may also be acceptable but includes Hawaiian, Samoan, Guamanian, and Alaskan natives. Whenever possible, specify the nation or peoples (eg, Navajo, Nez Perce, Iroquois, Inuit).
- *Hispanic* and *Latino* are broad terms that may be used to designate Spanish speaking persons as well as those descended from the Spanish-speaking people of Mexico, South and Central America, and the Caribbean. However, the terms are not interchangeable, since *Latino* is understood by some to exclude those of Mexican or Caribbean ancestry. In either case, these terms should not be used in noun form, and when possible, a more specific term (eg, Mexican, Mexican American, Latin American, Cuban, Cuban American, Puerto Rican) should be used. Similarly, Asian persons may wish to be described according to their country or geographic area of origin, eg, Chinese, Indian, Japanese. Note that *Asian* and *Asian American* are not interchangeable. Do not use *Oriental* or *Orientals*.

Age. When referring to the entire population of elderly persons, use of the *elderly* may be appropriate (as in the impact of prescription drug

costs on the elderly, for example). Otherwise, terms such as *older persons*, *older people*, *elderly patients*, *geriatric patients*, *older adults*, *older patients*, *aging adults*, *persons 65 years and older*, or *the older population* are preferred. *Note:* In studies that involve human beings, age should always be given specifically. Researchers in geriatrics may use defined terms for older age groups, eg, young-old (usually defined as 60 or 65 to 70 or so years) and old-old (80 years and older).

lesbians and *gay men* may be preferable to the broader term *homosexuals* when referring to specific groups of women and men, respectively. Avoid using *gay* or *gays* as a noun. *Heterosexual* and *homosexual* may be used as adjectives (eg, *heterosexual men*). A member of a heterosexual or homosexual couple may be referred to as *spouse*, *companion*, *partner*, or *life partner*. *Same-sex couple* and *same-sex marriage* are appropriate terminology.

<i>Avoid</i>	<i>Preferred</i>
the disabled, the handicapped	persons with a disability
disabled child, mentally ill person, retarded person	child with a disability, person with mental illness, person with intellectual disability
Diabetics	persons with diabetes
Asthmatics	children with asthma
Epileptic	person affected by epilepsy
AIDS victim	person with AIDS
crippled, lame, deformed	physically disabled
the deaf	deaf persons
confined (bound) to a wheelchair	uses a wheelchair

Disabilities. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act² “a disability exists when an individual has any physical or psychological illness that “substantially limits” a major life activity, such as walking, learning, breathing, working, or participating in community activities.” Avoid labeling (and thus equating) people with their disabilities or diseases (eg, the blind, schizophrenics, epileptics). Instead, put the person first. Avoid describing persons as *victims* or with other emotional terms that suggest helplessness (*afflicted with*, *suffering from*, *stricken with*, *maimed*). Avoid euphemistic descriptors such as *physically challenged* or *special*.

Avoid metaphors that may be inappropriate and insensitive (blind to the truth, deaf to the request). For similar reasons, some publications avoid the term *double-blind* when referring to a study's methodology. *Note:* Some manuscripts use certain phrases many times, and changing, for example, “AIDS patients” to “persons with AIDS” at every occurrence may result in awkward and stilted text. In such cases, the adjectival form may be used.

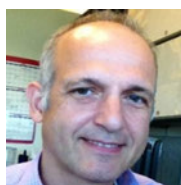
Sexual Orientation. Sexual orientation should be indicated in a manuscript only when scientifically relevant. Avoid the term *sexual preference* because it implies a voluntary choice of sexual orientation not supported by the scientific literature. The nouns

Acknowledgements: Thanks are due to Ajay Malik, PhD, for useful discussions
See pages 414 to 419 in the AMA Manual of Style 10th edition for additional information.

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About Dikran Toroser, PhD, CMPP



Dikran Toroser has been contributing to the *Postscripts* newsmagazine since 2012. He developed the monthly AMAzing Style column which covers topics from the AMA Manual of Style. He has also written on publication-related topics in these pages. Dikran is currently a Senior Medical Writing Manager at Amgen Inc. in Thousand Oaks, California. He earned his PhD in Biochemistry from Newcastle University (UK), and did his post-doctoral training in biochemical genetics at the John Innes Center of the Cambridge Laboratory (Norwich, UK) and in molecular biology with the USDA. Prior to Amgen, Dikran was on the faculty (research) at the School of Pharmacy at the University of Southern California. He can be reached at dtoroser@amgen.com.

First Biosimilar Recommended for Approval in the United States

By **Ellen Klepack, PharmD**

On January 7, 2015, the Oncologic Drug Advisory Committee made a recommendation to FDA to approve Novartis' EP2006, a biosimilar version of Amgen's Neupogen, which works to boost white blood cell counts in cancer patients. The recommendation includes all five indications currently in Neupogen's label. If approved, this would be the first true biosimilar marketed in the United States and could pave the way for many others to follow.

What is a Biosimilar?

Biologics are large molecule compounds derived from human or animal biologic sources and include products such as vaccines, monoclonal antibodies, gene therapies, proteins and blood products. Biologics are structurally more complex than traditional small molecule drugs (eg, statins, antihypertensives, analgesics) and are much more difficult to reproduce. Biosimilars are biologic products that are "highly similar" to a U.S. licensed reference biologic product with no clinically meaningful differences to the reference product in terms of safety, purity, and potency of the product.¹ Biosimilars are not identical to the reference biologic and cannot be substituted in place of the reference product without a prescription from a healthcare provider unless it has been determined that the biosimilar is "interchangeable". An "interchangeable" biosimilar must prove that the risks in terms of safety or diminished efficacy of alternating or switching between the biosimilar and reference product are not greater than using the reference product alone without such substitutions.¹

U.S. Regulatory Framework for Biosimilars

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act signed into law in 2010 allowed for the creation of an abbreviated licensure pathway for which biosimilars could come to market in the United States. Unlike the approval pathway for generic small molecules, which must prove bioequivalence but can rely on the safety and efficacy from the brand name reference

product, biosimilars must undergo both analytical and some additional clinical testing to prove similarity to the reference biologic. The type and extent of testing is based on its analytical and functional similarity to the reference biologic. FDA has not released a final set of regulations for biosimilars but has released a series of guidance documents which can be found on their website.²

It has been projected that biosimilars could provide cost savings of up to \$44.2 billion in the U.S. market, about 4% of the total biologic spending, over the next decade.³ While biosimilars are a new entry into the U.S. market; they have been approved and used for years in many other countries. European regulators started approving biosimilar products in 2006. In fact, Novartis' EP2006 has been marketed under the brand name Zarzio in more than 40 countries outside the U.S. and has generated more than 7.5 million patient-exposure days of experience.⁴

If EP2006 is approved in the U.S., it is not yet certain what its name will be. The naming of biosimilars has become a complex issue globally. Since biosimilars are not identical to the originator biologic, it is important that the name be distinguishable to avoid any confusion with prescribing, dispensing, and adverse event reporting. Novartis has proposed the name Zarzio but the FDA has not released guidance yet on the naming of biosimilars.

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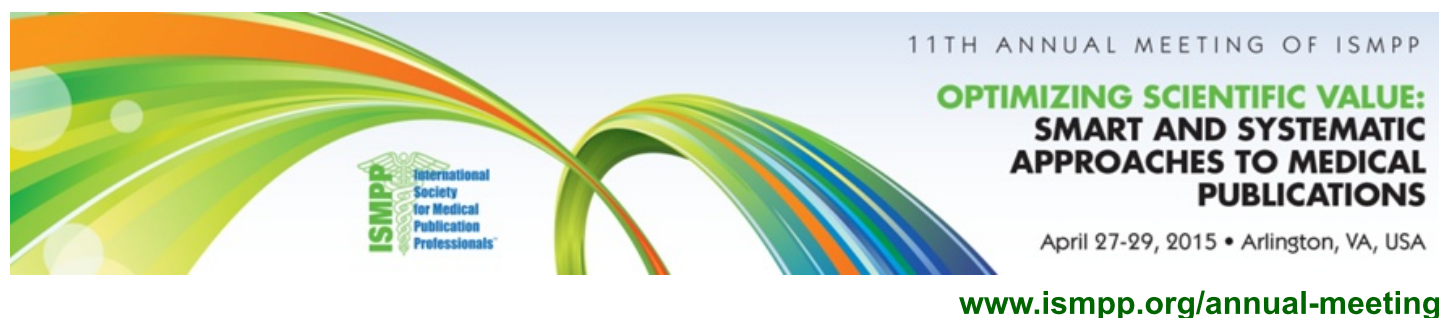
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About Ellen Klepack, PharmD

Ellen Klepack has been contributing to *Postscripts* newsmagazine since 2013 informing us about topics related to Safety and Pharmacovigilance, including newly released FDA guidelines and bulletins. Prior to medical writing, Ellen worked for ten years in the pharmaceutical industry in clinical development. She earned her PharmD from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She can be reached at www.linkedin.com/pub/ellen-klepack/4/14a/ba4.



The 14th International Publication Planning Association (TIPPA) Meeting in San Diego

By **Dikran Toroser, PhD, CMPP**, Amgen Inc.

The 14th International Publication Planning Association (TIPPA) meeting was held in San Diego (Feb 9-10th). A total of 102 attendees were at the meeting, many of which flew in from many parts of the US and Europe. Our president Donna Simcoe moderated two panels, as did a number of other AMWA Pacific Southwest chapter members, including Dikran Toroser.

The theme of the meeting was: *“Defining the role of publication planning in an increasingly global, transparent, and data-driven world”*.

As in previous years, TIPPA proved to be an extremely interactive meeting where there was substantial brain-storming and dialogue between and during the sessions. Numerous panels and presentations focused on the main theme as well as additional hot-topics. The “Sunshine Act” was discussed during a panel on day 1—it appears that this broadly written Act continues to be interpreted in diverse ways.

It was apparent from a number of presentations that an increasing importance will be given to patient input during the publication process—eg, in the form of patient reviews. Attending journal editors (eg, Martin Delahunty from the Nature Publishing Group), stated that journals are already increasingly incorporating patients’ perspectives. JAMA’s “patient pages”, which uses laymen’s language, was highlighted as a prime example of this trend. Editors also noted that finding reviewers is “the #1 challenge for editors.” The growth of Open Access publication was noted as a major trend that is now becoming the “established norm”—22,800 journals now have an Open Access option.

Discussants agreed that the publication landscape is rapidly changing. A number of passionate presentations during day-2 brain-stormed on how to react to the changing environment and the types of



Dikran Toroser (right)

metrics that could be useful to monitor publication planning performance. A useful survey on encore publications was very well received. It appears that the desire to present to different target audiences drives the placement of encore publications on publication plans. Surprisingly, less than half of the respondents thought encores should be exact reproductions. There was general agreement that publications plans are increasingly becoming global rather than regional in nature and that this trend would bring many opportunities as well as some real challenges. The TIPPA meeting was extremely well received, not only due to its excellent content, but also due to the venue—sunny San Diego. Many of the attendees commented that they were returning home to areas buried under historic amounts of snowfall.



Medical Writing as a Possible Career Choice A Review of the Joint AMWA/AWIS-SD Meeting of February 11th

By **April Cresse, PhD**, Association of Women in Science (AWIS) San Diego

Women from the Association for Women in Science (AWIS), San Diego gathered recently to learn about the field of Medical Writing. Many in the audience were members of the Back to Work Group of AWIS San Diego: a group that helps women transition back to a career in science after an absence.

AWIS San Diego invited the local chapter of AMWA to share and educate the AWIS members about the field of medical writing. Donna Simcoe, MS, MS, MBA, CMPP, and Ajay Malik, PhD, represented the AMWA Pacific Southwest chapter at the meeting and gave interactive presentations. Donna Simcoe is the President of the Chapter and Ajay Malik is the editor of the Chapter's newsmagazine, *Postscripts*.

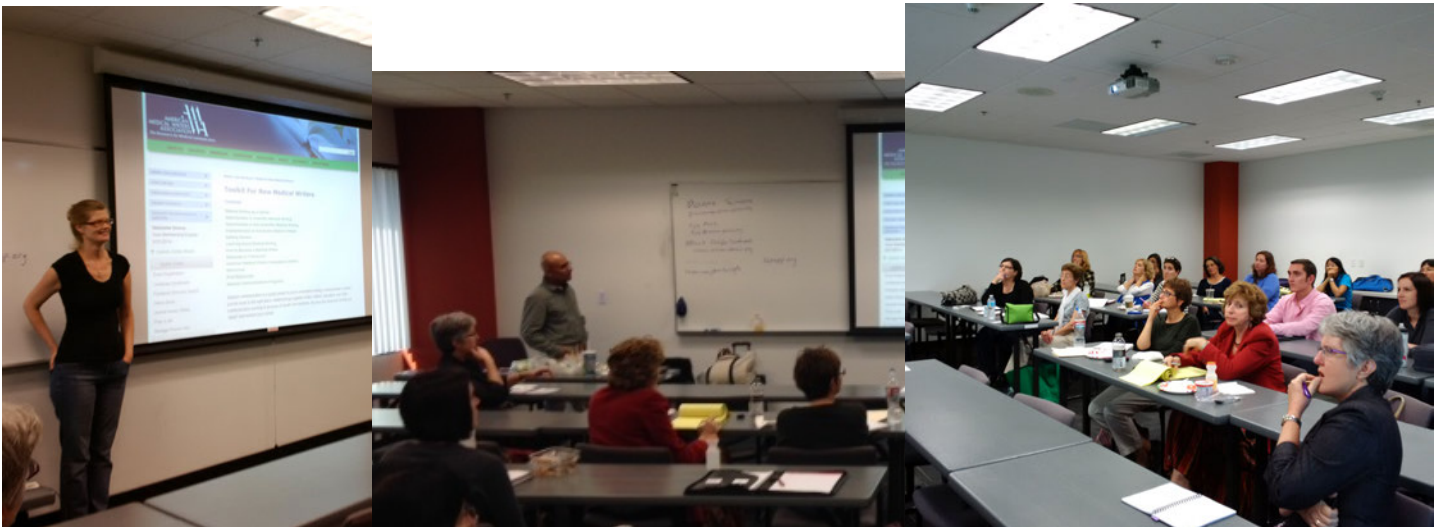
Donna related her journey to becoming a successful freelance medical writer. After working in a research laboratory, she earned two Master Degrees, one in Biotechnology and another in Biomedical Writing. Donna worked for many years writing journal articles, conference presentations, and managing publications for large pharmaceutical companies including Wyeth, AstraZeneca and Cadence. At these positions, she often hired freelance writers and Communications Agencies to help with the vast projects she managed. Her degrees in MBA and publication professional certification (CMPP)

prepared her well for those management roles.

Donna said that when hiring writers for these projects, she looked for writers with scientific expertise in specific fields related to the required writing project. She reassured the group of women that their expertise as scientists is valuable in Medical Writing. Currently, Donna is Principal of Simcoe Consultants, and she is doing freelance Medical Writing and managing medical publication strategy for pharmaceutical clients. She enjoys the flexibility this career offers.

Donna recommended the comprehensive AMWA website (www.amwa.org) as an essential resource, in particular the Tool Kit for New Medical Writers. She explained that AMWA members are able to access resources, such as, job postings and salary surveys, and participate in courses, certifications and workshops at a discount. She also presented descriptions from the AMWA website of what makes a successful Medical Writer: logical organization, accuracy, ability to write well, deadline oriented, solid computer skills, follow-up and networking.

Ajay also provided advice welcomed by the group about this career and recounted his own journey to becoming a successful Medical Writer. He was



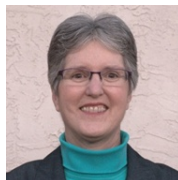
trained as a Virologist and did postdoctoral research work in gene therapy, oncology and regenerative medicine fields. Ajay's move towards medical writing came when he took a position with BioMarin Pharmaceutical and participated in writing projects for them. He is currently a Senior Medical Writer at Intercept Pharmaceuticals in San Diego.

Ajay said that he worked on his Medical Writing skills by taking courses through UCSD Extension and attending AMWA workshops. His advice to us was emphatic: "never turn down an opportunity to write something" and that if you want to be a Medical Writer you must choose to be a writer and use every opportunity to write. He believes that it is important to identify deficiencies in your skills and take appropriate action to improve them. A portfolio with concrete examples of your writing, is also very important at the early stage of your career. Research papers, with multiple authors, are not sufficient for these writing samples, he told us. Building one's individual writing portfolio can be done in a myriad of ways. Ajay wrote reviews and summaries of scientific meetings. He also wrote articles for medical education companies and started a blog showcasing his writings. It is also possible to move toward writing in your current job at a company by asking for opportunities to work on writing projects.

He recommended the department of Medical Affairs as a good place to start in a company for those with primarily research background. Another path to medical writing is through Clinical Research Organizations (CROs) because they are often willing to train people in Medical Writing. One way to make yourself ready and marketable for medical writing positions is to review current job postings, and start by working towards acquiring the skills listed by taking workshops, freelance and volunteer writing projects, blogs, self-study, and so on. Both Ajay and Donna encouraged membership in organizations, such as, AMWA and International Society of Medical Publication Professionals (ISMPP), networking with others at their meetings, using the resources (e.g., workshops, courses and webinars) provided by these organizations.

Donna concluded with a favorite quote of hers "Writing is a well-worn path, not a destination." We are grateful to these experts for generously sharing their career journeys and thoughtful advice so that others may embark on their own paths in this varied and rewarding field.

About April Cresse, PhD



April Cresse, PhD is the Secretary of the Association for Women in Science San Diego (AWIS-SD). She is also serves the Co-Chair of the Back to Work Initiative of AWIS-SD. April helps to develop programs to assist women who want to return to a career in science after an absence. April earned her B.A. in Biology from UC San Diego. She worked in various aspects of research at The Scripps Research Institute before specializing in genetics and molecular biology. April earned her Ph.D. in Biology from Purdue University. For her graduate work, she studied insertion specificity of transposable elements in the Robertson's *Mutator* Transposable Element System of maize. Additionally, she investigated genetic background effects in this system. April has also volunteered as a coach for Science Olympiad for middle and high school age students. She can be reached at: acresse2@gmail.com



Scott Harrington, PharmD, AMWA Pacific Southwest Chapter Member

Written by: Scott's Friends

Dr. Scott D. Harrington (born February 23, 1963) — a licensed and practicing Tucson pharmacist and local public outreach advocate of public healthcare safety — died January 20, 2015, at the age of 51.



After graduating from high school in Tucson, Dr. Harrington earned an Associate of Applied Science in Pharmacy Technology at Pima Community College in December 1991.

While working as a Pharmacy Technician at the University Medical Center (UMC), Dr. Harrington continued his education at the University of Arizona College of Pharmacy and earned his Doctor of Pharmacy degree (Pharm. D.) in May 1997. His final-year pharmacy internship was at the Warren G. Magnuson Clinical Center Hospital, National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, MD, where he compounded investigational anti-HIV drugs.

After graduation, Dr. Harrington completed post-doctoral residencies in pharmaceutical informatics at Creighton University School of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions in Omaha, NE. He continued his residency at the University of California San

Francisco (UCSF) where he worked as a pharmacist in the HIV outpatient clinic. Finally, he ended his residency at First DataBank in San Bruno, CA, where he worked on the National Drug Data File — a database pharmacists use today to counsel patients on drug safety and proper use.

Dr. Harrington later returned to Pima Community College to update his training with a HITECH certificate focused on health care informatics applications (including electronic medical records), so he could better serve patients.

To Dr. Harrington, the safety and welfare of patients was always his number one concern — he truly cared.

Throughout his lifetime, Dr. Harrington was passionate about and an advocate for patient medication safety — especially in the areas of the impact of medications on mental health and also of healthcare provider accountability, medical ethics and regulatory affairs. This motivated him to teach medication safety education programs through community outreach both to specific groups — local police departments, universities and hospitals — and also to the community-at-large through local radio programs. Wanting to ensure proper education of future healthcare providers, he contributed a chapter to the #1 best-selling nursing textbook "Pharmacology and the Nursing Process" (editions 4-6). In the spring of 2005 and also 2007, Dr. Harrington provided testimony to U.S. Congress on Capitol Hill on the topic of "Healthcare Integrity in Veterans Affairs Hospitals."

Dr. Harrington also believed in serving those areas he saw as most in need — especially under-served rural and minority communities. Earlier in his career, he was Director of Pharmacy, Northern Cochise Community Hospital (Willcox, AZ), where his duties included being Chief of the Pharmacy and

Therapeutics Committee, policy development, clinical consults, and long-term care regulatory consults. Later in his career, he served at Hu Hu Kam Memorial Hospital (Gila River Indian Reservation, Sacaton, AZ), where he could apply his extensive informatics skills in their state-of-the-art electronic health record (EHR) software which is used in all clinical practice activities.

Having initially studied Spanish as part of his education, Dr. Harrington saw the increasing importance of Spanish language skills for pharmacists in Arizona. As a life-long student and learner, he devoted his time outside of the pharmacy to improving his Spanish language proficiency, with, as he said, "the goal of being fully bilingual."

Always interested in learning more about other people, places and cultures, Dr. Harrington was also an avid traveler, having been all over the U.S. as well as Mexico, Canada and England. One of his most beloved and last trips was sailing the Queen Elizabeth 2 (QE2) from England back to the U.S.

Dr. Harrington was a member of several associations including the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP), American Medical Writers Association (AMWA), MENSA (a member since 2009), and was one of the younger members to join the Tucson Men's Social Network (MSN) during its charter year (March 1995 – February 1996).

As a cherished member of several Tucson communities, he will be greatly missed. Dr. Harrington is survived by his parents John & Bonnie Harrington of Beaumont, TX.

A Local Memorial - Celebration of Life was held 2 PM on Sunday Feb 8 at the Tiki Club House of Far Horizons Co-op, 5000 E. Grant Rd., Tucson, AZ 85712. Attendees brought photos and spoke in remembrance of him. For more information, please contact: Steve at steve.cruz@gmail.com.

[For verification purposes, please contact Broussard's Mortuary in Beaumont, TX - 409-866-3838.]

Medical Writing Open Positions -- February 2015

Compiled By: **Sharyn Batey, PharmD, MSPH**, PAREXEL International, San Diego
Employment Coordinator, AMWA PacSW Chapter

Medical Writer (6 month contract)

Undisclosed Company, Santa Clara, CA
Recruiter Brenda Negrón (bnegrón@novellaclinical.com)

Senior Medical Writer

Halozyne Therapeutics, Inc., San Diego, CA
<http://job-openings.monster.com/monster/de36219c-664b-4164-9a92-e15c2f78cf82?mescoId=2700440001001&jobPosition=2>

Technical Writer (Devices)

Undisclosed Company (K-Force recruiting) San Diego, CA
https://www.kforce.com/Jobs/1696~WQG~1402131T1~99/?utm_source=Indeed&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=Indeed&id=2129

Medical Writer

Meridius Health Communications, Inc., San Diego, CA
Contact: paula.soto@meridiushealth.com

Medical Writer (Long Term Opportunity)

Clarity Consultants, Thousand Oaks, CA
<http://jobview.monster.com/Medical-Writers-Long-Term-Opportunity-Job-Thousand-Oaks-CA-US-146644926.aspx?mescoId=2700440001001&jobPosition=1>

Medical Communications Manager

Amgen, Thousand Oaks, CA
https://sjobs.brassring.com/TGWebHost/jobdetails.aspx?jobId=1128986&partnerid=25236&siteid=5308&codes=JB_Indeed

Medical Writing Manager

Amgen, Thousand Oaks, CA
https://sjobs.brassring.com/TGWebHost/jobdetails.aspx?jobId=1126869&partnerid=25236&siteid=5308&codes=JB_Indeed

Scientific Writer (Process)

Peregrine Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Tustin, CA
<http://www.biospace.com/jobs/job-listing/scientific-writer-process-341017>

Medical Writer

Oncotherapeutics, West Hollywood, CA
<http://www.oncotherapeutics.com/careers/medical-writer>

If you want to share job leads with the members of the Pacific Southwest Chapter, please contact Sharyn at employment-coordinator@amwa-pacsw.org.

We are in the process of updating the jobs mailing list of chapter members who receive information about open medical writing positions during the month. If you either want to either continue receiving the updates or to begin receiving the updates, please contact Sharyn at employment-coordinator@amwa-pacsw.org.

Upcoming Chapter Events

A Medical Writer's "Vision" of Ophthalmology

Program Speaker: Denise L. Sturrock, MPH, Senior Technical Writer, Abbott Medical Optics

Denise Sturrock, MPH, Senior Technical Writer, Abbott Medical Optics, has been working in the medical device industry since 1989, primarily in ophthalmic clinical research. Denise will provide a brief review of common ophthalmic diseases and their treatment, with emphasis on medical devices. She will also review of key documents medical writers commonly author in support of clinical research and/or regulatory affairs, with emphasis on clinical evidence reports, trial registration and reporting in ClinicalTrials.gov, clinical study protocols, and clinical study reports.

Date: Saturday, March 21, 2015

Location:

Abbott Medical Optics Inc.
1700 East St. Andrew Place
Santa Ana, CA 92705

Agenda:

11:30 am – 12:00 pm, Registration, Open Networking
12:00 pm – 12:30 pm, Lunch
12:30 pm – 3:30 pm, Program Presentation

Registration: www.123signup.com/event?id=ypttv

Online Pre-registration (through March 15, 2015):

\$25 for AMWA members, \$30 for non-AMWA members. Lunch is included and will be selected during registration

Late Online Registration (March 16, 2015 or later) or On-Site Registration:

\$30 for AMWA members, \$35 for non-AMWA members. Lunch Not Included.



SAVE THE DATE!

2015 AMWA Pac-SW Conference
May 1 – May 2, 2015

Courtyard Marriott San Diego, Old Town
2435 Jefferson St, San Diego 92110
www.oldtownsandiegoguide.com

Join us for small-group workshops, networking opportunities and provocative conversations with writers, editors, scientists, and other medical communicators in fun-filled and historic Old Town, home to numerous food, shopping, entertainment and cultural venues.

Here's a taste of the open sessions:

- Preparing a Clinical Study Report
- Setting up a Freelance Business
- Using Storytelling Skills to Tailor Communications for Different Audiences
- Medical communications careers (panel discussion)



Plus 2 Workshops!

- Outlining for Writers and Editors (ES/EW/FL) [2007], Sue Hudson
- Effective Paragraphing (ES/G) [2003], Helen Hodgson

☀ 2015 PACIFIC-SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE AWARD ☀

Established to support ongoing education of medical writers, the award recipient will receive free conference registration. All current/aspiring medical writers are welcome to submit an entry. Information and entry form coming soon!

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

www.amwa.org//calendar_day.asp?event=1545&date=5/1/2015

The Art of E E Cummings



Cummings Art in College of Brockport collection. Collage by Ajay Malik.

Edward Estlin Cummings (October 14, 1894 – September 3, 1962), known as E. E. Cummings is best known for his poems with his signature syntax and use of all lowercase letters. His literary work includes over 2900 poems, 2 autobiographical novels, 4 plays and several essays. But less well known is the fact that he was also a painter and produced more than 1,600 oil paintings, drawings and watercolors during his lifetime.

The College at Brockport, a liberal arts college in New York, with 72 artworks has one of the largest collection of Cummings art. Much of Cummings art is in private collections. (He gave away most of his art.) The website of EE Cummings estate has a catalog of his artwork.

Sources and Further Readings:

EE Cummings collection at College of Brockport: <http://www.brockport.edu/cummings/intro.php>

EE Cummings estate (artwork): <http://eecummingsart.com/>

Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E._E._Cummings

Biography: <http://www.biography.com/people/ee-cummings-9263274>

—Editor



EE Cummings (self-portrait), circa 1920. via Wikipedia



The College at
BROCKPORT
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK